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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003118

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KOLY](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: OLYMPICS: CENTRAL CADRES SENT TO PROVINCES TO MEET
PETITIONERS, PREVENT DISRUPTION OF GAMES, CONTACT SAYS

REF: A. BEIJING 2592
[1](#)B. BEIJING 3005

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson
for reasons 1.4 b,d.

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) China's Central Government, according to one Embassy contact at the Ministry of Environmental Protection (protect), is sending cadres out to the provinces to meet directly with petitioners in an effort to dissuade them from traveling to Beijing during the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Our source is himself being sent to Zhejiang Province as part of this program, which he said was initiated by Vice President Xi Jinping. Each Ministry has been paired with a province, our contact reports, and must send cadres there to hear petitioners' grievances. End summary.

Heading Petitioners off at the Source

[1](#)2. (C) Mou Guangfeng (strictly protect), Director General of the Department of Environmental Impact Assessment Management at the Ministry of Environmental Protection, told PolOff August 10 that he will travel to Zhejiang Province the week of August 18 as part of a campaign to prevent petitioners from traveling to Beijing. Mou expects to remain in Zhejiang for a month. Each Central Government ministry, he said, has been assigned a province and is responsible for sending cadres to that province to meet with petitioners. Mou said the program is the brainchild of Vice President Xi Jinping and is linked to the Government's efforts to maintain security during the Olympic (August 8-24) and Paralympic Games (September 6-17). By giving petitioners a chance to speak directly with a Central Government official, Mou said, the hope is they will feel less of a need to travel to Beijing.

Each Ministry Assigned to a Province

[1](#)3. (C) Mou said he does not know how provinces were assigned to particular ministries, but he said Zhejiang is a good match for the Ministry of Environmental Protection since many disputes there, such as an ongoing controversy over noise pollution around Hangzhou's Xiaoshan Airport, involve environmental issues. Mou said his job will be to represent the Central Government and to respond to all petitioners, regardless of whether their grievances involve environmental issues. Mou told PolOff he is glad his ministry was assigned to prosperous Zhejiang

Province and not a poorer area, where petitioning issues tend to be more "complex" and harder to resolve.

14. (C) Mou said that the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (where Mou's wife once worked) has been assigned to deal with petitioners from Shanghai Municipality.

15. (C) The Ministry of Environmental Protection often calls on Mou to help respond to public protests over environmental issues. In 2007 he traveled to Xiamen to meet with residents who had demonstrated against the construction of a chemical plant. Earlier in 2008, Mou was the Ministry point person during negotiations with Shanghai residents angry at plans to expand the city's maglev train.

16. (C) The Chinese domestic press, including the August 4 issue of Caijing Magazine, has made reference to a program to send Central Government officials out to the provinces to deal with petitioners. These media reports, however, have offered few details about this effort. Caijing and other media reported that the program is an outcome of a June 28 video conference convened by the Central Government to urge local leaders to handle petitioners "properly" during the Olympic Games. The June 28 conference took place the same day a major riot broke out in Weng'an, Guizhou Province (ref A), and a few weeks before the Central Government issued new rules outlining punishments for local officials who fail to handle

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petitioners properly (ref B).
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